

**From:** Matt Ronen [MRonen@glgroup.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 03, 2008 5:06 PM  
**To:** Jackie Dille  
**Subject:** FW: Council Member quality / match quality / honesty re: insights

Jackie,

In the spirit of Year-End Evaluations, I wanted to pass along the note below from Dmitri. I helped kick-off a discussion which eventually contributed to Karen Choi's efforts to weed out bad Council Members. I will bring this up in my formal evaluation, but this is the raw email.

Thanks,  
Matt

Matthew S. Ronen | Research Associate | Multi-Sector Research

Gerson Lehrman Group | mronen@glgroup.com | www.glgroup.com  
850 Third Avenue, 9th Floor | New York, NY 10022  
tel +1 212 750 1907 | fax +1 212 984 8538

---

**From:** Matt Ronen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 13, 2008 9:08 AM  
**To:** Matt Ronen  
**Subject:** FW: Council Member quality / match quality / honesty re: insights

**From:** Dmitri Mehlhorn  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 13, 2008 12:32 AM  
**To:** Matt Ronen; Samuel Jacobs; Nick Barnard; Michael Rose; Matthew Unger  
**Cc:** Caroline Novogrod; Alexandra Baer; Michael Mallin; Phillip Pon; Christine Tse; Vivian Wang; Michael Mayes; Vivien Altman; Andrew Goldman  
**Subject:** RE: Council Member quality / match quality / honesty re: insights

Matt,

This is a very helpful and accurate distinction between the two issues. I agree that they are both important, with the "bad expert" idea slightly more urgent, and the "match quality" issue perhaps slightly more critical over the medium term. I'll defer to Mallin on the CouncilRank issue with all the quality implications.

The match quality issue is a huge issue as we use more and more niche consultants and true independents – even if people don't deliberately exaggerate their expertise, it's hard to know what people genuinely know. In the long term, we'll be able to facilitate a marketplace where individuals' and firms' brands come through in our market. In the medium term, however, we need to make that happen. I agree that sales and marketing should be included, as should the non-US team (of which I'm copying some leaders here). If anyone has any recommendations, please weigh in. I'll coordinate with Sam J to establish a working team.

Dmitri L. Mehlhorn | Managing Director

Gerson Lehrman Group | [dmehlhorn@glgroup.com](mailto:dmehlhorn@glgroup.com) | www.glgroup.com  
DC +1 202 682 9014 | NY +1 212 750 1212

---

**From:** Matt Ronen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 13, 2008 2:42 AM

**To:** Samuel Jacobs; Nick Barnard; Dmitri Mehlhorn; Michael Rose; Matthew Unger

**Cc:** Caroline Novogrod; Alexandra Baer; Michael Mallin

**Subject:** RE: Council Member quality / match quality / honesty re: insights

Team,

Thanks for allowing me to weigh in on this critical issue. I just want to frame this discussion a bit more by pointing out that we are dealing with two connected yet distinct challenges.

The first is challenge for us, as Dmitri said, is match quality. The second challenge, and the one I originally set out to address, is bad Council Members. The distinguishing characteristic between these two problems is that while there is a place for experts of varying qualities in our Councils, we still must maintain standards for the experts we connect our clients with in the first place. To do this, in addition to creating a scalable system, Council Rank, we also need to "weed out" CM's that consistently underperform or misrepresent themselves.

In terms of timing and prioritizing these issues, I see match quality as an on-going strategic challenge, whereas (somewhat anecdotally) curtailing/ending repeated consulting opportunities for bad CM's is critical and must be addressed in the short term. Mike Mallin's CRANK working group will be a great place to start.

Getting back to the strategic, I want to just toss out the idea that we may want to loop in sales/marketing into this effort, as the consequences of match quality ultimately affect their efforts to explain and sell our product. In the last several months I've noticed two developments that may affect our business in the future. The first is the arrival of a competitor that could potentially eclipse us in sheer expert network size. The second, (via Google Alerts with keyword: Gerson Lehrman Group) is that Council Members—Scholars and Leaders—are increasingly marketing themselves on personal websites by pointing to their status with GLG.

By marketing our Councils as selective and Council membership contingent upon quality, we will be able to better position ourselves as the premium expert network. If GLG is considered a veritable stamp of approval, certainly this will go a long way in attracting both clients and the top experts who are often leery of this type of work. Most importantly, the greatest defense against size is quality.

Thanks,  
Matt

Matthew S. Ronen | Research Associate | Multi-Sector Research

Gerson Lehrman Group | mronen@glgroup.com | www.glgroup.com  
850 Third Avenue, 9th Floor | New York, NY 10022  
tel +1 212 750 1907 | fax +1 212 984 8538

---

-----Original Message-----

From: Michael Mallin

Sent: Tuesday, August 12, 2008 11:01 AM

To: Michael Rose; Nick Barnard; Dmitri Mehlhorn; Matthew Unger

Cc: Samuel Jacobs; Matt Ronen; Caroline Novogrod; Alexandra Baer; Mark Naman

Subject: RE: Council Member quality / match quality / honesty re: insights

Hi,

Thanks for including me. I've read through the entire thread, beginning with Dmitri's email, and I have a few comments and ideas.

1) First, you should all know that I recently kicked off an effort to significantly expand our use of CouncilRank and work through the necessary branding and messaging decisions in collaboration with GLG's Marketing team. CouncilRank has always been important, and exposing it to the outside world and better leveraging it is something we've wanted to do for some time now; the catalyst for this current effort is that we recently completing a re-engineering effort that gives us the ability to calculate CouncilRank with very high frequency, as Nick mentioned in his email. This is best explained in the attached three-pager that I sent to Marketing yesterday to outline what we're doing. While I'd love your feedback on it, please don't send this around to a wider audience.

2) This week, I'm going to set up a CouncilRank working group - precisely to address the types of things brought up in this email. Alexandra and Ronen - I hope you'll accept my invite to participate :). I'm going to keep it lean.

3) I agree that all of these sorts of things should feed into CouncilRank eventually. However, the operative word is "eventually". If ideas like Ronen's three-strike concept can solve a problem immediately, we should seriously consider implementing them in advance of them being absorbed by CouncilRank. I see this as part of the function of the working group, and we'll take it as a task to decide on Matt's idea (and the broader issues related to independent consultants, honesty, etc.) as soon as possible.

4) Regarding feedback: this is highly important and highly tricky. Alexandra, I'm very curious to hear what the RMs say about the Leaders who've received 1s and 2s. We need to proceed with caution, but definition proceed nonetheless, when we think about taking feedback into account programmatically.

Please contact me with any comments about the attached, and also send me names for the working group if you have ideas.

Thanks!  
Mike

---

**From:** Samuel Jacobs  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 12, 2008 10:07 AM  
**To:** Nick Barnard; Dmitri Mehlhorn; Michael Rose; Matthew Unger  
**Cc:** Matt Ronen; Caroline Novogrod; Alexandra Baer; Michael Mallin  
**Subject:** RE: Council Member quality / match quality / honesty re: insights

Yes, Nick.

I think the feedback issue is important but I am also hopeful that the new survey systems do a better job in helping Research Managers profile Council Members with more specificity so that we can do a better job on the upfront.

We also need to create RM incentives to avoid over-giving, especially in our MSR/Client Solutions team where they often lack the context about specific Council Members and their tendency to inflate their knowledge.

I'm also supportive of something like a 3 strike rule and/or a warning/flag system where it directly impacts their CouncilRank. How explicit are we about overstating knowledge in the CMP currently?

Sam F. Jacobs | Managing Director | Research Management

Gerson Lehrman Group | [sjacobs@glgroup.com](mailto:sjacobs@glgroup.com) | [www.glgroup.com](http://www.glgroup.com)  
850 Third Avenue, 9th Floor | New York, NY 10022  
tel +1 212 984 3676 | fax +1 212 984 8538

find | engage | manage

---

**From:** Nick Barnard  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 12, 2008 12:16 AM  
**To:** Dmitri Mehlhorn; Michael Rose; Matthew Unger  
**Cc:** Samuel Jacobs; Matt Ronen; Caroline Novogrod; Alexandra Baer; Michael Mallin  
**Subject:** RE: Council Member quality / match quality / honesty re: insights

Dmitri and Sam ---

I like Matt R.'s three strike rule. I am copying Mike Mallin who could be a critical player if we were to implement such an idea in "real-time CouncilRank". Ultimately, we need CouncilMembers to feel the consequences of taking on consultations where they're not entirely suited to discuss the subject matter. As you know, we don't take client feedback at face value in CouncilRank. However, I think we should if the feedback is a 2 or lower AND we notice that the client confirms the feedback or doesn't call the CM again in some specified time frame (i.e. they're not gaming the feedback system).

To help us assess the scope of the problem and review how often we're disappointing clients with GLG Leaders (our most heavily used and marketed consultants), Alexandra on the Member Solutions team acquired a reportrequest last week identifying Leaders receiving a feedback ranking of 2 or lower in the last 3 months. As I'm on webmail, I will forward her analysis shortly. There were 34 Leaders who received a feedback ranking of 1 and 91 who received a 2 in the last 3 months. We were going to follow up with the RMs on these projects to seek additional clarity surrounding the negative feedback. Was the feedback due to the CM's lack of subject matter expertise, a difficult project where the Leader was the best of bad alternatives, poor consulting etiquette by the Leader (rambling)? Those results should be informative for thinking about potential solutions.

A common theme at Council Connect events was the request by Leaders and Scholars for more feedback on how they're performing. Real-time CouncilRank is one idea. But I think we should also consider enabling clients to fill out a free text field where they can provide "Tips for the CM". We already see some clients filling out feedback as if they expect the experts to receive their comments.

Finally, I believe the Research workflow tools being released in September may help us address client satisfaction by getting clients more involved in the expert vetting process pre-invite or pre-give. Ownership over expert selection may help "right-size" their quality expectations.

Sam, when we catch up tomorrow, shall we add this subject to the agenda as well?

Nick

---

**From:** Dmitri Mehlhorn  
**Sent:** Mon 8/11/2008 11:09 PM  
**To:** Nick Barnard; Michael Rose; Matthew Unger  
**Cc:** Samuel Jacobs; Matt Ronen; Caroline Novogrod  
**Subject:** Council Member quality / match quality / honesty re: insights

Nick, Sam,

One of the problems we face as we increasingly emphasize independent consultants, rather than people who are currently employed by companies, is that we have a tough time ensuring that these folks represent themselves properly and accurately in their responses to invites to consult, and in their biographies. We often comment that when clients complain about our competitors providing "better" people, it's because competitors deliver company employees without

appropriate respect for the relevant compliance issues. This is partially true, but I think the issue is a bit more subtle than we typically make it out to be. In at least some cases where clients complain, they complain not about consultants lacking information per se (although that is happening), but that the consultants mislead the client regarding what they know. I believe that there are a material number of client inquiries where our competitors deliver company employees, and we deliver independents, and the client is dissatisfied because we delivered the wrong consultant. The challenge is that if we're not relying on current employment, we rely much more on the Council Members to accurately represent what they know. We need to do a better job of accurately assessing the insights and skills of Council Members who are not current employees?

So, what is the platform-like solution here? I'm copying Matt Ronen because he had an interesting idea of a "three strike" rule whereby Council Members would get black marks for overstating their expertise. I'm also copying Caroline as she's been thinking through this issue for functional expertise, which like subject-matter expertise is a bit tricky to figure out. I'm also copying Rose and Unger as they're working through techniques for using the "community" (i.e., market transactions and CM-to-CM communications) to validate expertise.

I know we have a number of important initiatives going on right now, and folks throughout the firm are taking leadership on various aspects of those initiatives. That said, this one strikes me as important. We're getting increasing feedback from clients as to match quality declining for GLG, and it's one of the most common factors cited in clients choosing not to renew with us.

Can you put your heads to the problem of "match quality", specifically in the context of independent and niche consultant CMs self-reporting their skills, and let me know your thoughts? I'm fine if the answer is "we're all over this," or if the answer is "we need another task-force to address this," or anything in between, I just wanted to reach out and get your thoughts.

Look forward to hearing from you. Everyone else should feel welcome to weigh in as well.

[Dmitri L. Mehlhorn](#) | Managing Director

[Gerson Lehrman Group](#) | [dmehlhorn@glgroup.com](mailto:dmehlhorn@glgroup.com) | [www.glgroup.com](http://www.glgroup.com)  
1023 15th St NW, 6th Floor | Washington, DC 20005  
DC +1 202 682 9014 | NY +1 212 750 1212

find | engage | manage

New York | Austin | Boston | Chicago | Los Angeles | San Francisco | Washington, DC  
London | Hong Kong | New Delhi | Shanghai | Singapore | Sydney | Tokyo